DC
ULTRA, the MULTI-ALIEN, BATTLES THE FIENDISH
"PIED PIPER of PLUTO!"
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MYSTERY IN SPACE
SEPT.
12¢
SIZZLING SATURN! THE PIED PIPER HAS PIPED UP A "SEA SERPENT" FROM UNDER THE GROUND!
WHOOOOOO WHOO TWEEET TWEEEEE

ULTRA The MULTI-ALIEN

WEIRD FLUTING MUSIC WAFTING THROUGH THE AIR!...A SIREN SONG LURING PEOPLE TOWARD AN UNKNOWN DOOM! SUCH IS THE NEW MYSTERY THAT TANTALIZES *ULTRA*, THE *MULTI-ALIEN*, WHEN HE SEEKS TO CIRCUMVENT THE PERILOUS PLOT OF...

The PIED PIPER of PLUTO!

EEEEEE...OOOO... HUMMM...TWEET!
STOP THAT HYPNOTIC MUSIC! WHERE ARE YOU LURING THESE PEOPLE?
TO DIMENSION-Z, ULTRA! BUT TRYING TO STOP THE PIED PIPER OF PLUTO IS A MULTI-MISTAKE, YOU FOUR-PART FREAK!
LEE ELIAS

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OUTSIDE OF DALESVILLE, AT THE SECRET MOUNTAIN LAIR OF ULTRA, THE MULTI-ALIEN...
MY NEW HYPER-CONVERTER DISC, INSERTED IN THIS BELT BUCKLE, SHOULD DO THE SAME THING THAT MACHINE DID BEFORE... CHANGE ME BACK TO HUMAN FORM! AH, IT'S WORKING! EXIT ULTRA...
...ENTER CAPTAIN ACE ARN, SPACE PILOT! AT LAST, I HAVE A QUICK AND HANDY WAY OF CHANGING BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN MY ALIEN AND HUMAN FORMS! I'LL KEEP THE DISC CONCEALED!
NOW TO SEE BONNIE AGAIN... I SURE HATE TO KEEP MY IDENTITY AS ULTRA FROM HER, BUT IT'S BEST THAT SHE DOESN'T KNOW!
BUT FICKLE FATE IS ABOUT TO FOIL YOU, ACE ARN... FOR FAR OFF IN SPACE AT THE PLUTO LABS, AN EERIE PHENOMENON TAKES PLACE...
EEEEE...O°o°... HUMMM... TWEET... TWEET... ♫ ♪♫
MUST... LEAVE!
AND... GO... NORTH!
COME... ALL... OF... US!
ELSEWHERE, OTHER SKILLED PROFESSIONALS OF PLUTO SEEM TO "MIGRATE" NORTH, LURED AWAY BY THE SIREN SOUNDS...
EEEEE...O°o°... HUMMMM... ♫ TWEET-TWEET! ♫ ♪ ♫
FOLLOW... MUSIC!
ONWARD!
KEEP... GOING... NORTH!
2

EVEN THE PLUTONIAN PATROL POLICE FALL UNDER THE WEIRD SPELL!
CAN'T... RESIST... COMPELLING... MUSIC! BUT MUST FORCE MYSELF TO... SEND WARNING... TO ULTRA, MULTI-ALIEN! MYSTERY FOR HIM... TO SOLVE...
POLICE
AND THUS IT IS THAT ACE ARN IS INTERRUPTED...
PLUTO CALLING! PEOPLE... LURED TO UNKNOWN... FATE! HYPNOTIC MUSIC... COME QUICK, ULTRA... GASP!
HMM... LOOKS LIKE A NEW SPACE JOB HAS COME UP FOR ME! I'LL TOUCH THE OTHER STUD ON MY HYPER-CONVERTER DISC, AND...
PRESTO! I'M BACK TO THE UGLY ALIEN DUCKLING! BUT AS ULTRA, THE MULTI-ALIEN, I CAN PILE ON TOP SPEED THROUGH SPACE AND REACH PLUTO IN TWO SHAKES OF A COMET'S TAIL!
A CONCEALED CHUTE OPENS ELSEWHERE IN THE CLIFF, AND ULTRA'S SPACE CRUISER CATAPULTS FORTH!
AS ACE ARN, THE HUMAN, 10 G'S ACCELERATION WOULD BLACK ME OUT! AS ULTRA, THE MULTI-ALIEN, I CAN TAKE 100 G'S LIKE IT WAS FLOATING ON CLOUDS! HERE GOES! DESTINATION... PLUTO... AND MYSTERY!
BURNING UP SPACE, ULTRA SOON ARROWS THROUGH THE SOLAR SYSTEM TO PLUTO...
COMPELLING MUSIC, EH? I DON'T KNOW IF IT WILL AFFECT ME... AS AN ALIEN FROM ANOTHER SOLAR SYSTEM... BUT I'LL TAKE MY CHANCES THAT IT DOESN'T!
SOON, AN INCREDIBLE SIGHT...
EEEEEE... OOo°°... HUMMMMM... TWEET... ♪ TWEET! ♫ ♪
ONWARD... ONWARD!
I'M IMMUNE TO THAT MUSIC, ALL RIGHT-- BUT WHY ARE THEY ALL HYPNOTIZED BY IT? WHO MAKES THE MUSIC? I'LL SHOOT AHEAD AND FIND OUT...

LIKE A SCENE OUT OF ANCIENT LEGENDS...
SHADES OF HAMELIN TOWN! IT'S LIKE THE "PIED PIPER" TALE, WHERE HE FIRST LURED RATS, THEN CHILDREN, OUT OF TOWN!
EEEEEEE... O₀°•••...
♪ HMMMM... TWEET, ♫ ♪ TWEET! ♫ ♪
LOOK... ULTRA, THE MULTI-ALIEN! IF HE THINKS HE CAN STOP THE PLUTO PIPER, HE MADE A MULTI-MISTAKE!
THE BODYGUARDS OPEN UP WITH POWERFUL BLASTERS!
THE NEXT CRATER WE DIG WILL BE IN YOU, MEDDLER!
I DIG YOU! BUT BEFORE YOU FIND MY RANGE, I'LL FIND YOURS...
... AND DOSE YOUR WEAPONS WITH INDUCED MAGNETISM!
JUMPING JUPITER! TH-THEY FLEW FROM OUR HANDS AND CRASHED TOGETHER!
A COUPLE OF MULTI-JOLT BOLTS AT THEM AND... SHOCKED, FELLOWS? NOW TO FLATTEN THE BIG CHEESE... THE PLUTO PIPER!
THE MULTI-FOOL! HE'LL CHANGE HIS TUNE... AFTER I CHANGE MY TUNE!
OMINOUS NEW NOTES SHRILL FROM THE ALIEN INSTRUMENT!
HOO₀.•... UMMMM... YEEEEEEE! ♫ ♪ ♫
MY VERSATILE ELECTRONIC FLUTE WILL NOW PLAY THE DITTY OF DEATH... FOR ULTRA! IT'S A "NESTING CALL"...
4

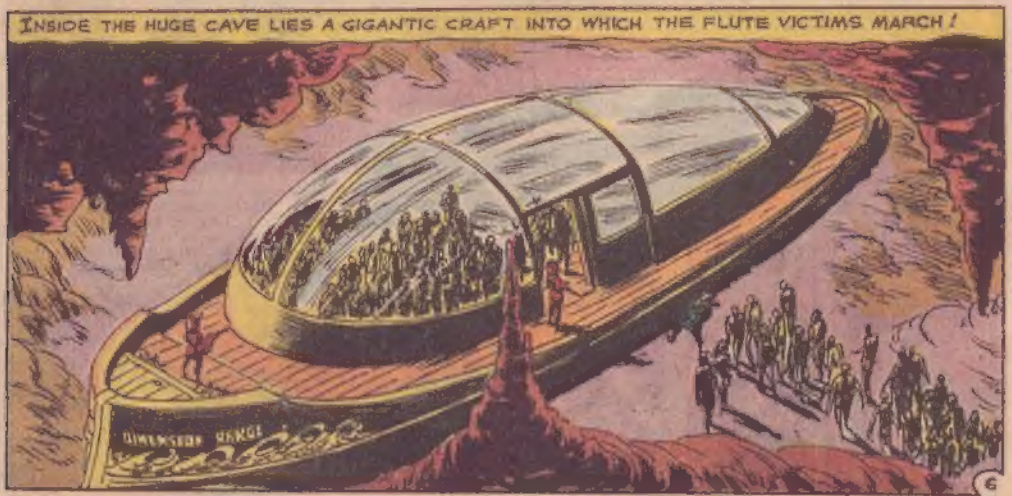
...THAT LURES THE FLYING SWORD-BEAKS, THE WORST VULTURE SPECIES KNOWN IN THIS SUN SYSTEM! ULTRA WILL SOON LOOK LIKE A ROAST ON A SPIT! HA, HA!
ULPS!... MY MOST POWERFUL LIGHTNING-BLASTS ONLY GLANCE OFF THEIR "ARMORED" HIDES!
YOU CAN HEAR MY TELEPATHIC TALK, ULTRA! YOU CAN'T STOP ME, MULTI-IDIOT! AFTER I NEXT LURE AWAY THE AGRI-MEN FROM THEIR FIELDS, I'LL TRANSPORT THEM OUT OF YOUR REACH FOREVER!
DESPERATELY, ULTRA UNLEASHES HIS SUPER-MUSCLED RIGHT ARM, BUT...
I GOT "STUNG"... MY FIST IS STINGING, BUT NARY A SCALE KNOCKED OFF THAT FLYING VULTURE! WHAT NEXT? AH, THOSE ROCKS BELOW ARE TYPICAL GEOLOGICAL SPECIMENS OF LODESTONE...OR MAGNETIC IRON ORE...
POW!
...WHICH I CAN ATTRACT WITH MY MAGNETIC HAND, AS "AMMUNITION!" NOW FOR A "BROADSIDE" AT THOSE FLYING "BATTLESHIPS" TO SINK THEIR FLEET!
BUT BEFORE ULTRA CAN DRIVE OFF ALL OF THE VORACIOUS CREATURE SWARM...
WORK YOUR WAY OUT OF THAT, NOSEY! HMMM... THE PLUTO PIPER HAD TIME TO LURE HIS VICTIMS OUT OF SIGHT! CAN'T TELL WHICH WAY HE TOOK THEM... AND THAT MIDDAY WIND IS WIPING OUT ALL FOOTPRINTS THEY MIGHT HAVE LEFT! THE TRAIL IS LOST!
5

BUT THAT FIENDISH FLUTIST DROPPED A TIP-OFF TO HIS PLANS BEFORE--THAT HE WOULD LURE AWAY THESE PEASANT-FARMERS NEXT! SO I'LL LAND SECRETLY...

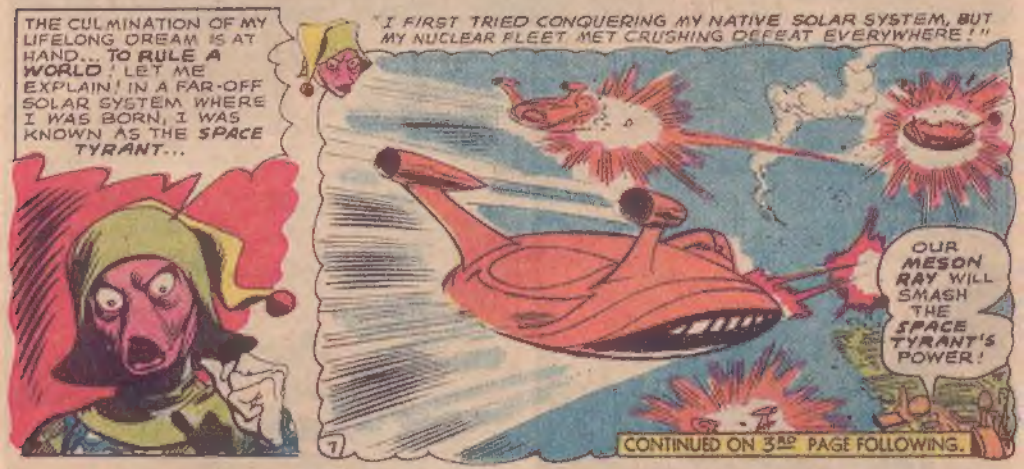
...AND CHANGE BACK TO MY HUMAN FORM, THEN BORROW AN AGRI-MAN OUTFIT AS A DISGUISE! ALSO, I'LL PLUG MY EARS!

NO SOONER DOES ACE ARN MINGLE WITH THE WORKERS THAN MACABRE MUSIC COMES WAFTING OVER THE HILL...
GOT TO FIND OUT WHERE THE PLUTO PIPER LEADS THEM... SO I'LL PRETEND I WENT INTO A TRANCE, LIKE THE OTHERS!
WE... MUST... FOLLOW... MUSIC!

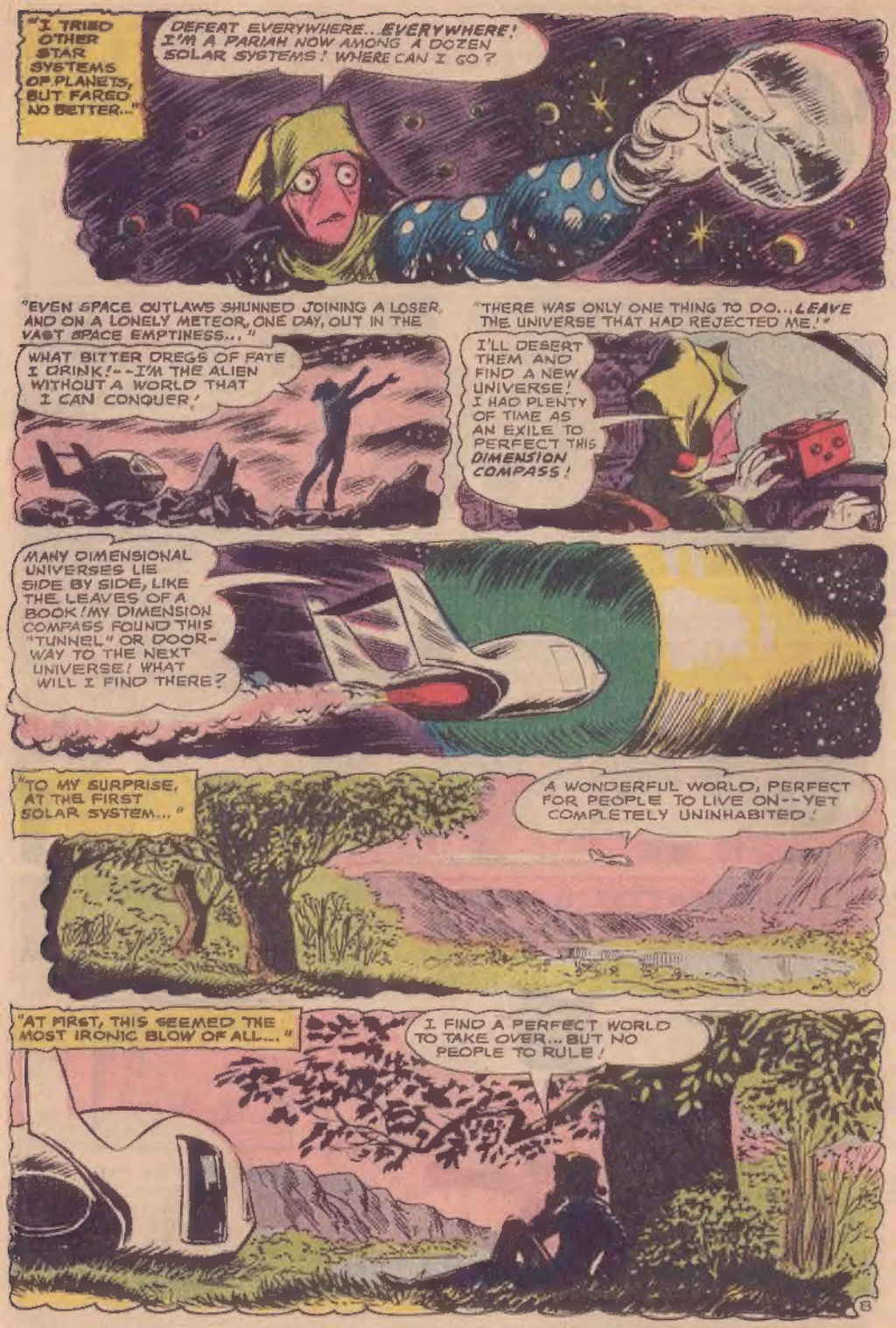
A BIG CAVE! SO THAT'S HOW THE OTHER BAND VANISHED FROM SIGHT! BUT WHAT HAPPENS TO THE PEOPLE AFTER THEY ENTER? I'VE GOT TO SEE THIS THROUGH...


INSIDE THE HUGE CAVE LIES A GIGANTIC CRAFT INTO WHICH THE FLUTE VICTIMS MARCH!
DIMENSION RANGE
6

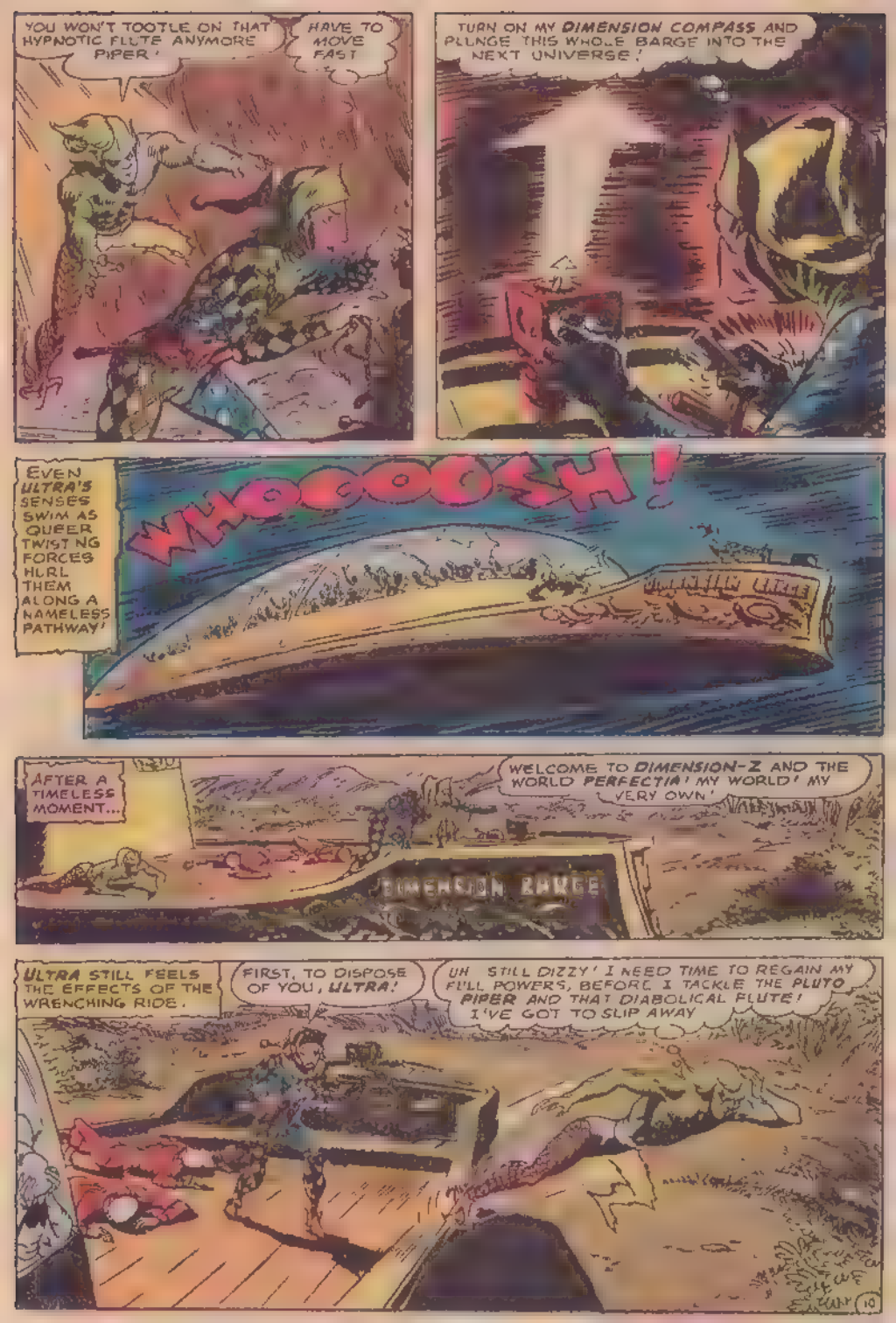
AFTER ALL HAVE FILED ABOARD, THE HYPNOTIC MUSIC STOPS...
WHERE ARE WE BEING TAKEN?
LET US OUT!
HELP!
ATTENTION, ALL! YOU WILL NOW HEAR MY STORY, AND FIND OUT WHY I HAVE LURED YOU TO MY DIMENSION BARGE!

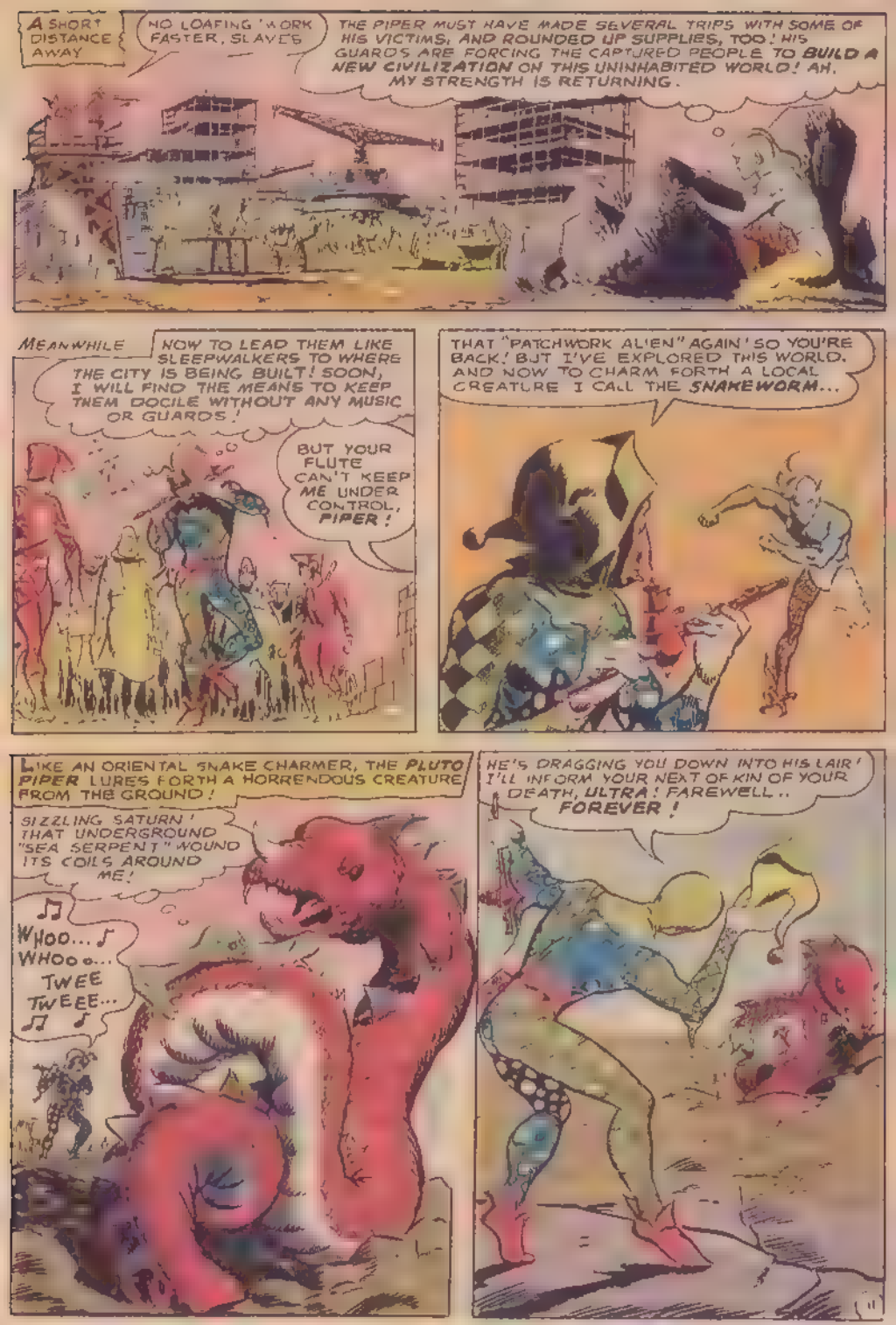

THE CULMINATION OF MY LIFELONG DREAM IS AT HAND... TO RULE A WORLD! LET ME EXPLAIN! IN A FAR-OFF SOLAR SYSTEM WHERE I WAS BORN, I WAS KNOWN AS THE SPACE TYRANT...
"I FIRST TRIED CONQUERING MY NATIVE SOLAR SYSTEM, BUT MY NUCLEAR FLEET MET CRUSHING DEFEAT EVERYWHERE!"
OUR MESON RAY WILL SMASH THE SPACE TYRANT'S POWER!
7
CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING.

THREE FANTASTIC WEIRD THRILLERS!
STRANGE ADVENTURES
WATCH OUT! Terror-The LIVING SCARECROWS!
NOW ON SALE!
For the MOST in THRILLS...
GO-GO-GO
SUPERMAN
DC
NATIONAL COMICS
MYSTERY
DISC HERO
The MUMMY with SIX HEADS!
NOW ON SALE


"I TRIED OTHER STAR SYSTEMS OF PLANETS, BUT FARED NO BETTER..."
DEFEAT EVERYWHERE..EVERYWHERE! I'M A PARIAH NOW AMONG A DOZEN SOLAR SYSTEMS! WHERE CAN I GO?
"EVEN SPACE OUTLAWS SHUNNED JOINING A LOSER, AND ON A LONELY METEOR, ONE DAY, OUT IN THE VAST SPACE EMPTINESS..."
WHAT BITTER DREGS OF FATE I DRINK!--I'M THE ALIEN WITHOUT A WORLD THAT I CAN CONQUER!
"THERE WAS ONLY ONE THING TO DO...LEAVE THE UNIVERSE THAT HAD REJECTED ME!"
I'LL DESERT THEM AND FIND A NEW UNIVERSE! I HAD PLENTY OF TIME AS AN EXILE TO PERFECT THIS DIMENSION COMPASS!
MANY DIMENSIONAL UNIVERSES LIE SIDE BY SIDE, LIKE THE LEAVES OF A BOOK! MY DIMENSION COMPASS FOUND THIS "TUNNEL" OR DOORWAY TO THE NEXT UNIVERSE! WHAT WILL I FIND THERE?
"TO MY SURPRISE, AT THE FIRST SOLAR SYSTEM..."
A WONDERFUL WORLD, PERFECT FOR PEOPLE TO LIVE ON--YET COMPLETELY UNINHABITED!
"AT FIRST, THIS SEEMED THE MOST IRONIC BLOW OF ALL..."
I FIND A PERFECT WORLD TO TAKE OVER...BUT NO PEOPLE TO RULE!
8

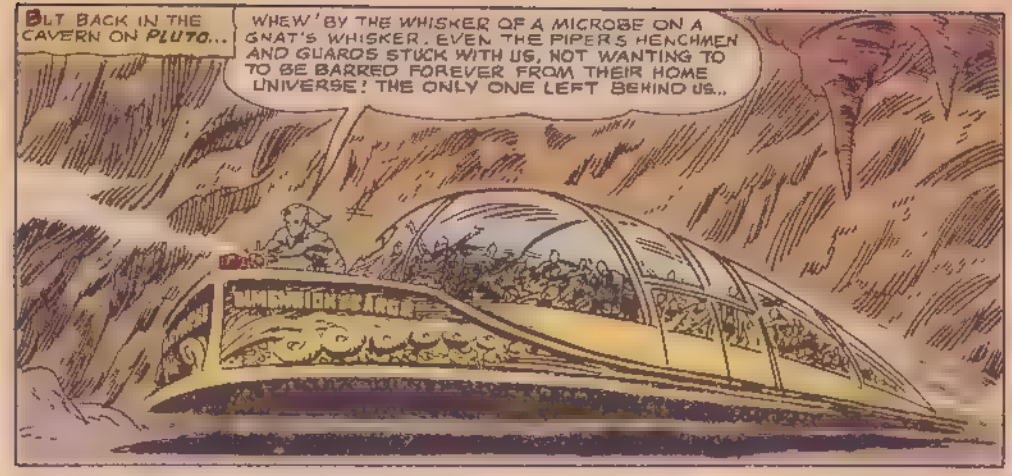
"BUT THEN, THE GREAT INSPIRATION CAME TO ME!"
WAIT... WHY NOT POPULATE THIS EMPTY WORLD? BRING SCIENTISTS, FARMERS, MECHANICS, ALL THE REST THAT ARE NEEDED TO BUILD CIVILIZATION? AND WITH ME AS THEIR RULER! PERFECT... PERFECT!
"UTILIZING MY SUPER-SCIENTIFIC BRAINPOWER...
THERE... IT'S DONE! WHEN THE VIBRATIONS OF CERTAIN MUSIC NOTES ARE COMBINED, A BRAIN-ENSLAVING TUNE WILL RESULT! PEOPLE WILL BE FORCED TO FOLLOW!
MANY BARGE-LOADS OF DIFFERENT BEINGS WILL POPULATE THAT EMPTY, WAITING WORLD... UNDER MY RULE!
I'VE HEARD ENOUGH! TIME FOR ULTRA TO GET INTO THE ACT TO STOP THAT MEGALOMANIAC!
PRESSING HIS BELT STUD, ACE QUICKLY TRANSFORMS, AND...
JUMPING JUPITER! IT'S ULTRA! HOW'D HE GET HERE?
ZAP!
FIRST, TO MAKE YOUR TWO STOOGES HEAR SOME MUSIC--THE TWEET-TWEET OF BIRDS!
9

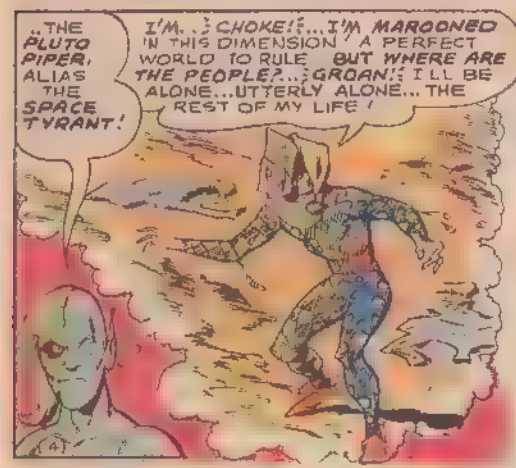

YOU WON'T TOOTLE ON THAT HYPNOTIC FLUTE ANYMORE PIPER!
HAVE TO MOVE FAST
TURN ON MY DIMENSION COMPASS AND PLUNGE THIS WHOLE BARGE INTO THE NEXT UNIVERSE!
EVEN ULTRA'S SENSES SWIM AS QUEER TWISTING FORCES HURL THEM ALONG A NAMELESS PATHWAY!
WHOOOOSH!
AFTER A TIMELESS MOMENT...
WELCOME TO DIMENSION-Z AND THE WORLD PERFECTIA! MY WORLD! MY VERY OWN!
DIMENSION RANGE
ULTRA STILL FEELS THE EFFECTS OF THE WRENCHING RIDE.
FIRST, TO DISPOSE OF YOU, ULTRA!
UH STILL DIZZY! I NEED TIME TO REGAIN MY FULL POWERS, BEFORE I TACKLE THE PLUTO PIPER AND THAT DIABOLICAL FLUTE! I'VE GOT TO SLIP AWAY
10

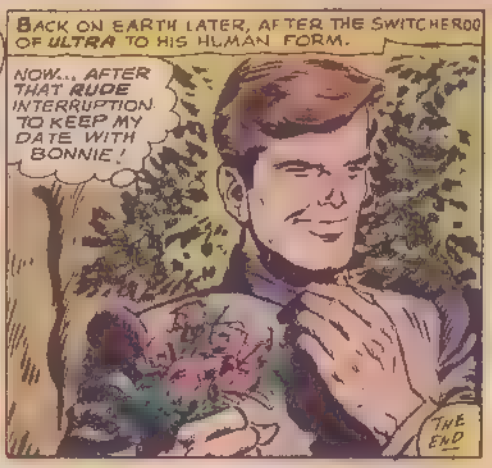

A SHORT DISTANCE AWAY
NO LOAFING! WORK FASTER, SLAVES!
THE PIPER MUST HAVE MADE SEVERAL TRIPS WITH SOME OF HIS VICTIMS, AND ROUNDED UP SUPPLIES, TOO! HIS GUARDS ARE FORCING THE CAPTURED PEOPLE TO BUILD A NEW CIVILIZATION ON THIS UNINHABITED WORLD! AH. MY STRENGTH IS RETURNING.
MEANWHILE
NOW TO LEAD THEM LIKE SLEEPWALKERS TO WHERE THE CITY IS BEING BUILT! SOON, I WILL FIND THE MEANS TO KEEP THEM DOCILE WITHOUT ANY MUSIC OR GUARDS!
BUT YOUR FLUTE CAN'T KEEP ME UNDER CONTROL, PIPER!
THAT "PATCHWORK ALIEN" AGAIN! SO YOU'RE BACK! BUT I'VE EXPLORED THIS WORLD. AND NOW TO CHARM FORTH A LOCAL CREATURE I CALL THE SNAKEWORM...
LIKE AN ORIENTAL SNAKE CHARMER, THE PLUTO PIPER LURES FORTH A HORRENDOUS CREATURE FROM THE GROUND!
SIZZLING SATURN! THAT UNDERGROUND "SEA SERPENT" WOUND ITS COILS AROUND ME!
WHOO... WHOO... TWEE TWEEE...
HE'S DRAGGING YOU DOWN INTO HIS LAIR! I'LL INFORM YOUR NEXT OF KIN OF YOUR DEATH, ULTRA! FAREWELL.. FOREVER!

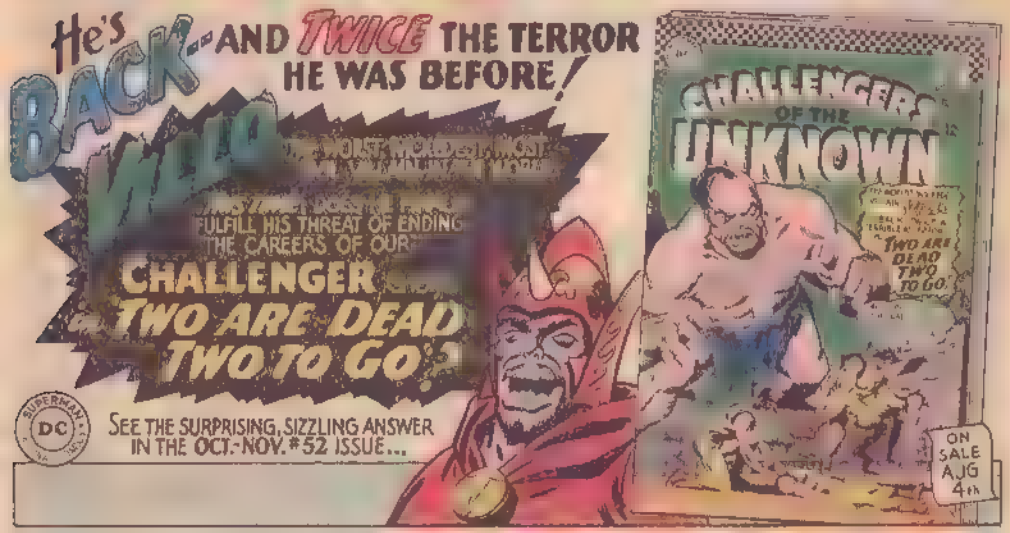
HOW CAN TINY ULTRA BATTLE THIS COLOSSAL MONSTER?
HE'S PLANNING DINNER... ON ME! ONE CHANCE IF I CAN WRENCH MY LIGHTNING-LEG FREE
OOF!
AH! I DID IT! THESE MILLION-VOLT LIGHTNING CHARGES CAN'T KILL THIS BIG BOY, BUT THEY'LL TICKLE HIS THROAT..
... AND MAKE HIM COUGH VIOLENTLY! HIS BODY CONTORTIONS MADE HIS COILS UNWIND! SORRY, PAL! I'LL SEND YOU SOME GIANT-SIZED COUGHDROPS!
FIRST MY MAGNETIC ARM YANKS YOUR TWO GADGETS OUT OF YOUR HANDS THEN I'M GOING TO WIPE THE FLOOR WITH YOU! EVEN IF IT MAKES THE FLOOR DIRTIER!
ULTRA ZOOMS OUT OF HIS UNDERGROUND TRAP.
HAVE TO GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO SURPRISE THAT FLUTING FIEND!
12

THAT'S WHERE YOU'RE WRONG ULTRA! MY AEROSOL ENERGY SPRAY FORMED AN IMPENETRABLE FORCE-FIELD BARRIER AROUND ME! YOU CAN'T TOUCH ME NOW!
AND SINCE I CAN'T USE MY DIMENSION-COMPASS OR FLUTE ANYMORE, I'LL DESTROY THE DIMENSION-TUNNEL THAT BRIDGES OUR TWO UNIVERSES! I PREVIOUSLY PLANTED A SUPER-DISRUPTER CHARGE IN THE TUNNEL...HERE GOES TO TRIGGER OFF THE TIMER FUSE! 60..59..58
ULTRA ACTS SWIFTLY--IN A DEADLY RACE AGAINST TIME!
EEEE..O°o.O..o HUMMM...TWEET-TWEET!
I MEMORIZED THE PLUTO PIPER'S 'SIREN SONG' BEFORE NOW TO PLAY IT 100 TIMES FASTER SO THAT THEY'LL ALL RUN ABOARD THE DIMENSION-BARGE!
35.. 34 33
AS THE PIPER'S COUNTDOWN OF DOOM CONTINUES INEXORABLY
13.. 12... 11...
TEN SECONDS TO USE THE DIMENSION-COMPASS AND TAKE-OFF
A TITANTIC ANTI-MATTER BLAST FOREVER WRECKS THE DIMENSION TUNNEL SEALING APART TWO DIFFERENT UNIVERSES
WILL WE GET THROUGH THE DIMENSION TUNNEL IN TIME!...GULP!!
3..2..1.. ZERO!


BUT BACK IN THE CAVERN ON PLUTO...
WHEW! BY THE WHISKER OF A MICROBE ON A GNAT'S WHISKER, EVEN THE PIPER'S HENCHMEN AND GUARDS STUCK WITH US, NOT WANTING TO TO BE BARRED FOREVER FROM THEIR HOME UNIVERSE! THE ONLY ONE LEFT BEHIND US..

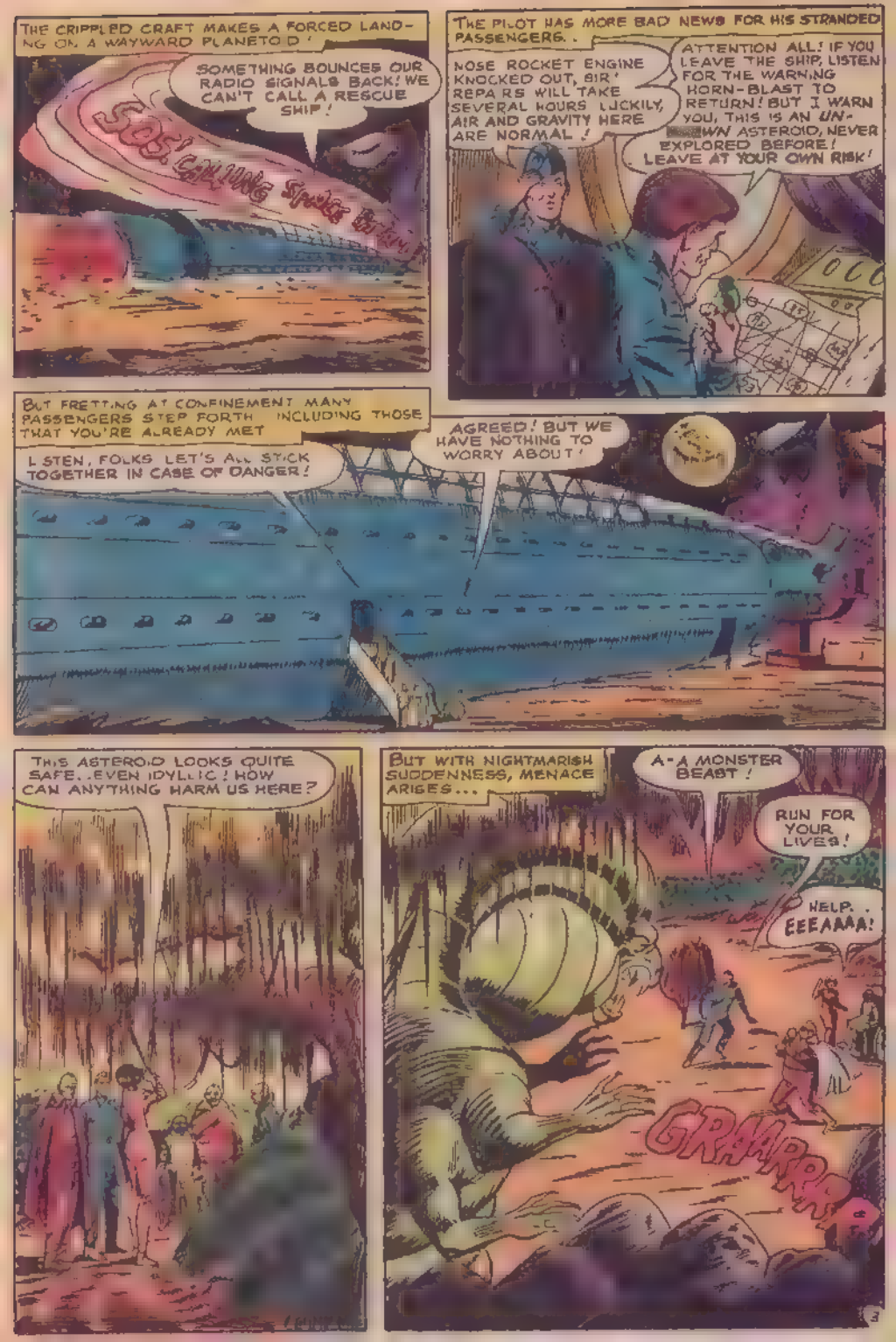

...THE PLUTO PIPER, ALIAS THE SPACE TYRANT!
I'M...CHOKE!...I'M MAROONED IN THIS DIMENSION! A PERFECT WORLD TO RULE BUT WHERE ARE THE PEOPLE?...GROAN! I'LL BE ALONE...UTTERLY ALONE... THE REST OF MY LIFE!

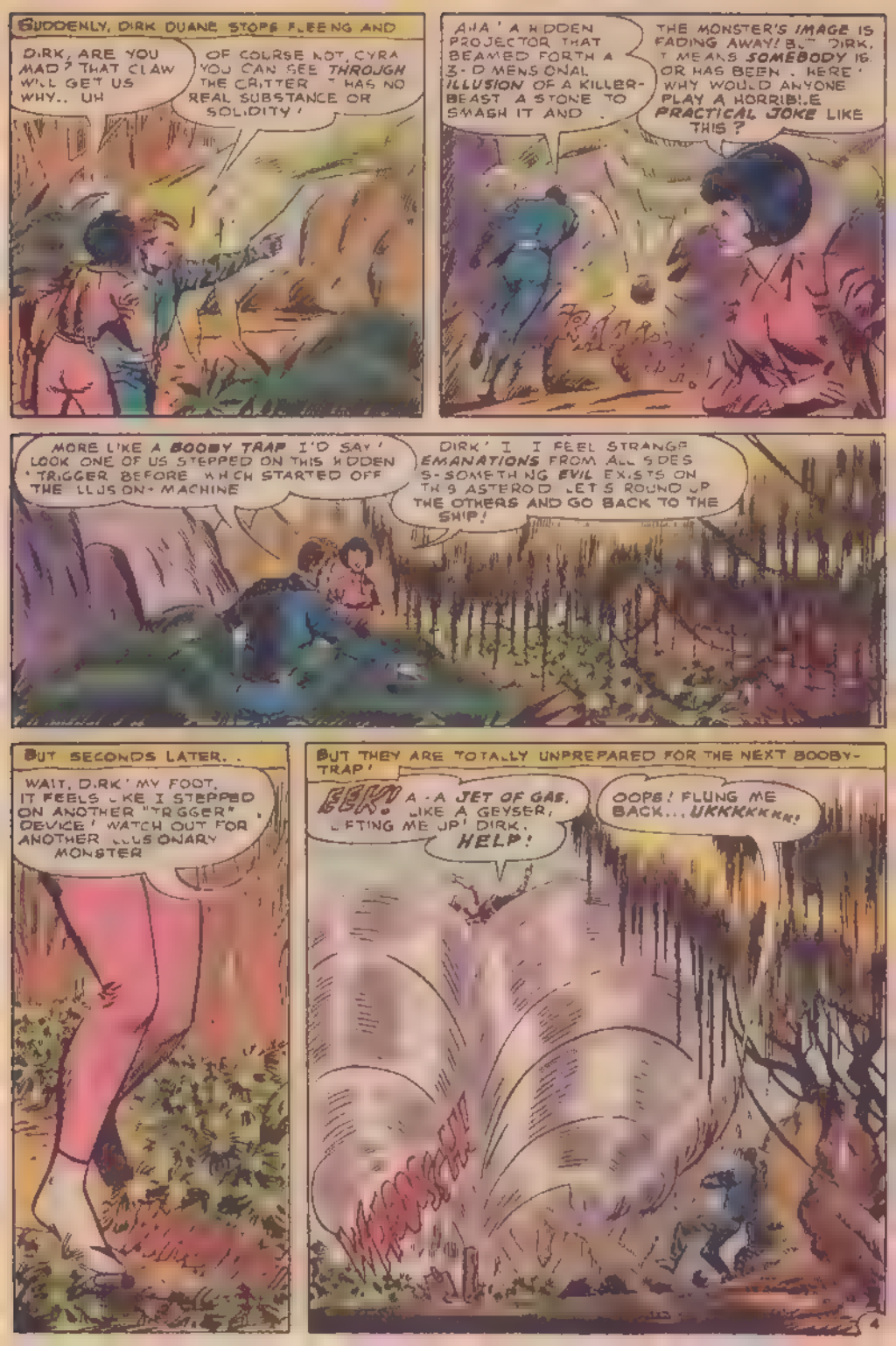

BACK ON EARTH LATER, AFTER THE SWITCHEROO OF ULTRA TO HIS HUMAN FORM.
NOW... AFTER THAT RUDE INTERRUPTION TO KEEP MY DATE WITH BONNIE!
THE END

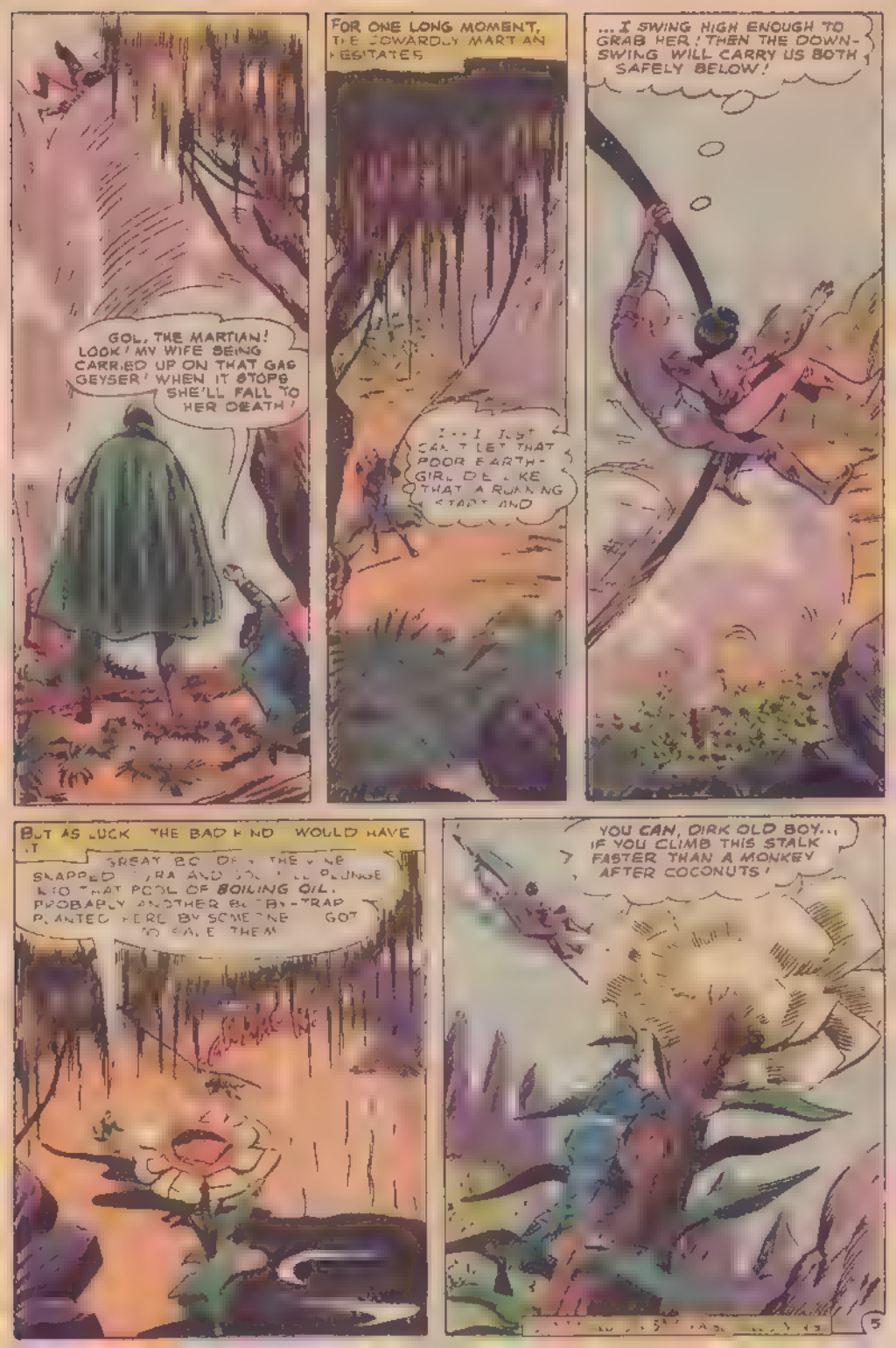

He's BACK... AND TWICE THE TERROR HE WAS BEFORE!
WILL HE FULFILL HIS THREAT OF ENDING THE CAREERS OF OUR CHALLENGER TWO ARE DEAD TWO TO GO?
SEE THE SURPRISING, SIZZLING ANSWER IN THE OCT.-NOV. #52 ISSUE...
SUPERMAN
DC
CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN
TWO ARE DEAD TWO TO GO
ON SALE AUG 4th

HAPPY PASSENGERS ARE ROCKETING TOWARD THE SOLAR SYSTEM'S MOST GALA VACATION RESORT, LITTLE KNOWING THAT THEIR TRUE DESTINATION IS--SHIPWRECK IN SPACE! WHEN THEIR GREAT SPACELINER CRASH LANDS THE LIVES OF SIX PEOPLE ABOARD ARE DESTINED TO BE STRANGELY ALTERED AS THEY EXPLORE
THE BOOBY TRAPPED ASTEROID!
DIRK, I FEEL EVIL EMANATIONS FROM SOMEWHERE ON THIS ASTEROID! TH-THIS PLACE IS DANGEROUS!
DIRK AND CYRA DUANE EARTH NEWLYWEDS
KRAASHHHH!
COWARDLY MARTIAN
JIK-JO, VENUSIAN TYCOON
XAXXO, BANKRUPT MERCURIAN
PITTA URANIAN INVALID

LEAVING MARS, THE SPACELINER STARSHELL ROCKETS THROUGH THE ASTEROID BELT TOWARD JUPITER AND TOWARD A STRANGE DESTINY FOR THE VACATIONERS ABOARD!
ATTENTION, PLEASE! YOU WILL SEE A THOUSAND PLANETOIDS ALL AROUND US, OF ALL QUEER SHAPES AND SIZES!
AMONG THE MIXED PASSENGERS FROM MANY WORLDS ARE DIRK AND CYRA DUANE NEWLYWEDS FROM EARTH...
THE RED SPOT RESORT WHERE WE'RE GOING IS CALLED THE "PLAYGROUND OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM"!
WE'LL HAVE FUN THERE, DARLING!
BUT THEIR HAPPINESS IS HARDLY SHARED BY GOL, THE MARTIAN, WHO IS PLAGUED BY MANY COWARDLY FEARS!
WH-WHAT IF WE'RE ON THE WRON- COURSE? :GULP:. OR THE AIR GETS POISONED?..:CHOKE: OR THE ENGINES BLOW UP? HOW CAN I EAT, WITH MY VERY LIFE IN DANGER?
VELOCITY 98 MI PER SECOND
AIR PRESSURE NORM
FUEL RESERVE -UNJS
QUITE OPPOSITE THOUGHTS OCCUPY THE MIND OF HIS TABLE COMPANION XAXXO THE MERCURIAN
MY MERCURY MINES WENT BANKRUPT! LIFE IS HARDLY WORTH LIVING, TO ME!
JIK-JO, THE VENUSIAN TYCOON, AND PITTA, THE URANIAN INVALID, ALSO HAVE DIFFERENT EMOTIONS.
WEALTH IS EVERYTHING!
HEALTH IS EVERYTHING... :SIGH!:
SUDDENLY, DISASTER STRIKES OUT OF NOWHERE
GIANT METEOR FLASHED OUT FROM BEHIND AN ASTEROID.. STRUCK SHIP'S NOSE... DEFLECTED US OFF COURSE! SOUND THE ALARM FOR PASSENGERS TO STRAP IN FOR EMERGENCY MANEU'ERS!
WHAM!


THE CRIPPLED CRAFT MAKES A FORCED LANDING ON A WAYWARD PLANETOID!
SOMETHING BOUNCES OUR RADIO SIGNALS BACK! WE CAN'T CALL A RESCUE SHIP!
SOS! CALLING SPACE PATROL!
THE PILOT HAS MORE BAD NEWS FOR HIS STRANDED PASSENGERS..
NOSE ROCKET ENGINE KNOCKED OUT, SIR! REPAIRS WILL TAKE SEVERAL HOURS LUCKILY, AIR AND GRAVITY HERE ARE NORMAL!
ATTENTION ALL! IF YOU LEAVE THE SHIP, LISTEN FOR THE WARNING HORN-BLAST TO RETURN! BUT I WARN YOU, THIS IS AN UNKNOWN ASTEROID, NEVER EXPLORED BEFORE! LEAVE AT YOUR OWN RISK!
BUT FRETTING AT CONFINEMENT MANY PASSENGERS STEP FORTH INCLUDING THOSE THAT YOU'RE ALREADY MET
LISTEN, FOLKS LET'S ALL STICK TOGETHER IN CASE OF DANGER!
AGREED! BUT WE HAVE NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT!
THIS ASTEROID LOOKS QUITE SAFE..EVEN IDYLLIC! HOW CAN ANYTHING HARM US HERE?
BUT WITH NIGHTMARISH SUDDENNESS, MENACE ARISES...
A-A MONSTER BEAST!
RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!
HELP.. EEEAAAA!
GRAARRR


SUDDENLY, DIRK DUANE STOPS FLEEING AND
DIRK, ARE YOU MAD? THAT CLAW WILL GET US WHY.. UH
OF COURSE NOT, CYRA YOU CAN SEE THROUGH THE CRITTER IT HAS NO REAL SUBSTANCE OR SOLIDITY!
AHA! A HIDDEN PROJECTOR THAT BEAMED FORTH A 3-DIMENSIONAL ILLUSION OF A KILLER-BEAST A STONE TO SMASH IT AND
THE MONSTER'S IMAGE IS FADING AWAY! BUT DIRK, IT MEANS SOMEBODY IS OR HAS BEEN HERE! WHY WOULD ANYONE PLAY A HORRIBLE PRACTICAL JOKE LIKE THIS?
MORE LIKE A BOOBY TRAP I'D SAY! LOOK ONE OF US STEPPED ON THIS HIDDEN TRIGGER BEFORE WHICH STARTED OFF THE ILLUSION-MACHINE
DIRK! I I FEEL STRANGE EMANATIONS FROM ALL SIDES SOMETHING EVIL EXISTS ON THIS ASTEROID LET'S ROUND UP THE OTHERS AND GO BACK TO THE SHIP!
BUT SECONDS LATER..
WAIT, DIRK! MY FOOT, IT FEELS LIKE I STEPPED ON ANOTHER "TRIGGER" DEVICE! WATCH OUT FOR ANOTHER ILLUSIONARY MONSTER
BUT THEY ARE TOTALLY UNPREPARED FOR THE NEXT BOOBY-TRAP!
EEK! A JET OF GAS, LIKE A GEYSER, LIFTING ME UP! DIRK, HELP!
OOPS! FLUNG ME BACK... UKKKKKK!


GOL, THE MARTIAN! LOOK! MY WIFE BEING CARRIED UP ON THAT GAS GEYSER! WHEN IT STOPS SHE'LL FALL TO HER DEATH!
FOR ONE LONG MOMENT, THE COWARDLY MARTIAN HESITATES
I--I JUST CAN'T LET THAT POOR EARTH-GIRL DIE LIKE THAT! A RUNNING START AND
...I SWING HIGH ENOUGH TO GRAB HER! THEN THE DOWN-SWING WILL CARRY US BOTH SAFELY BELOW!
BUT AS LUCK THE BAD KIND WOULD HAVE IT
GREAT BOOTS OF THE NINE SNAPPED! I'LL AND SOON I'LL PLUNGE INTO THAT POOL OF BOILING OIL. PROBABLY ANOTHER BOOBY-TRAP PLANTED HERE BY SOMEONE GOT TO SAVE THEM
YOU CAN, DIRK OLD BOY... IF YOU CLIMB THIS STALK FASTER THAN A MONKEY AFTER COCONUTS!
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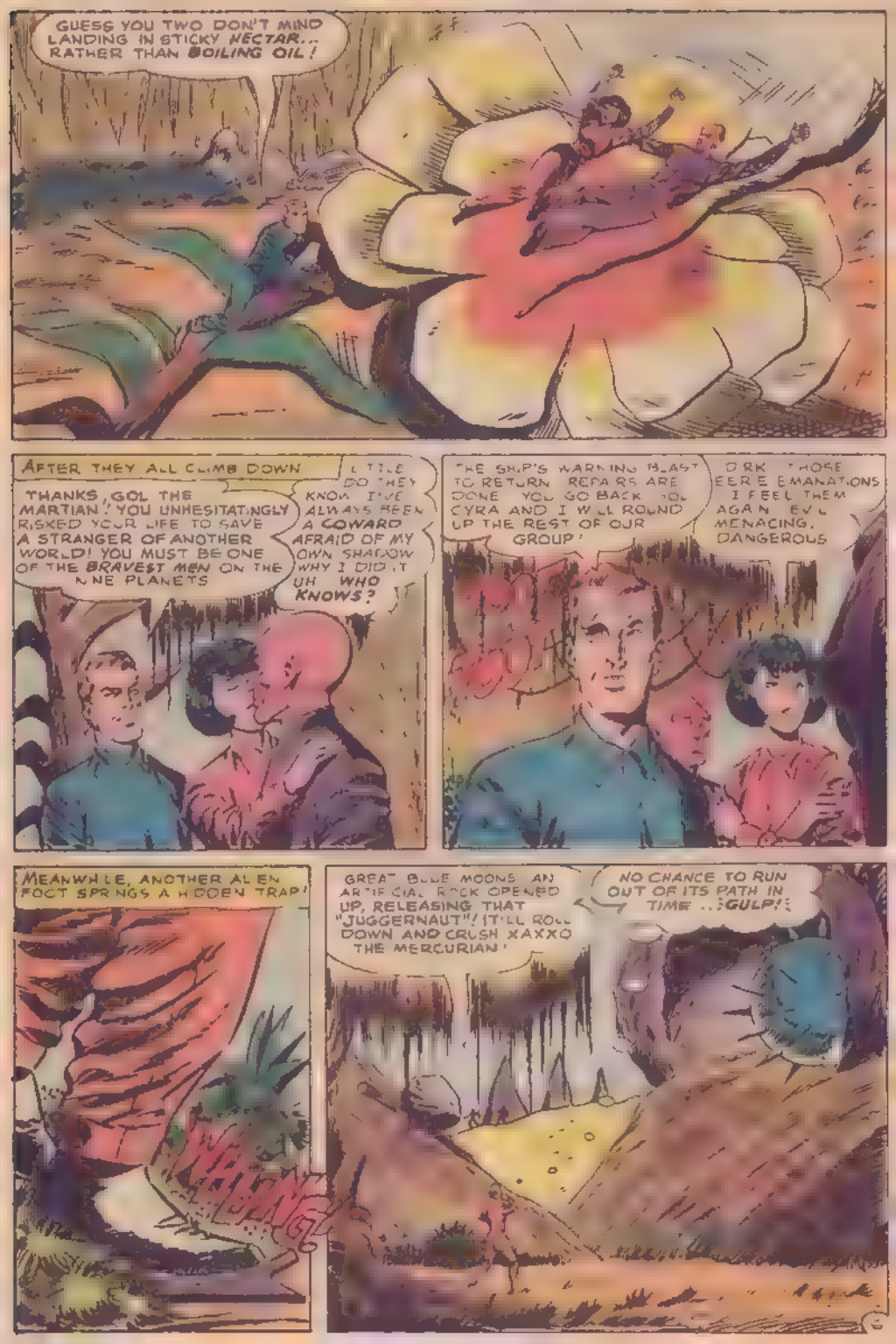
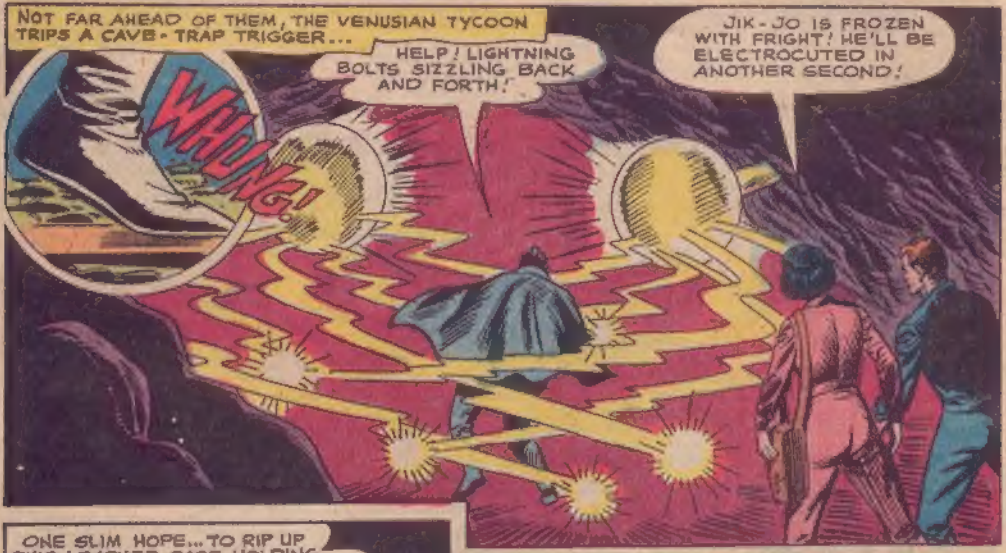

GUESS YOU TWO DON'T MIND LANDING IN STICKY NECTAR... RATHER THAN BOILING OIL!
AFTER THEY ALL CLIMB DOWN
THANKS, GOL THE MARTIAN! YOU UNHESITATINGLY RISKED YOUR LIFE TO SAVE A STRANGER OF ANOTHER WORLD! YOU MUST BE ONE OF THE BRAVEST MEN ON THE NINE PLANETS
LITTLE DO THEY KNOW I'VE ALWAYS BEEN A COWARD AFRAID OF MY OWN SHADOW WHY I DID IT UH WHO KNOWS?
THE SHIP'S WARNING BLAST TO RETURN REPAIRS ARE DONE YOU GO BACK TO CYRA AND I WILL ROUND UP THE REST OF OUR GROUP!
DRK THOSE EERIE EMANATIONS I FEEL THEM AGAIN EVIL MENACING, DANGEROUS
MEANWHILE, ANOTHER ALIEN FOOT SPRINGS A HIDDEN TRAP!
GREAT BLUE MOONS! AN ARTIFICIAL ROCK OPENED UP, RELEASING THAT "JUGGERNAUT"! IT'LL ROLL DOWN AND CRUSH XAXXO THE MERCURIAN!
NO CHANCE TO RUN OUT OF ITS PATH IN TIME ..:GULP!:

SWIFTLY GRABBING A FALLEN TREE BRANCH, DIRK EXERTS ALL HIS STRENGTH...
A LITTLE OLD-FASHIONED LEVERAGE... SHOULD BUDGE THIS HUGE ROCK... AHH... THERE IT GOES! IF I TIMED IT RIGHT...
NICE "BILLIARDS" IF I SAY SO MYSELF! THE COLLISION MADE THE SPIKED BALL RICOCHET ASIDE, MISSING THE MERCURIAN!
GRAASH!
SECOND WARNING TO RETURN TO THE SPACELINER! YOU GO BACK, XAXXA! THE URANIAN AND VENUSIAN ARE STILL AT LARGE!
TOOT TOOT
HURRY, DIRK! THOSE EVIL EMANATIONS ARE GROWING STRONGER! SOME UNKNOWN DANGER, EVEN WORSE THAN ANY OF THE BOOBY-TRAPS, LURKS ON THIS ASTEROID... I JUST FEEL IT!
ELSEWHERE, ANOTHER BOOBY-TRAP IS TRIGGERED OFF, AND...
WHUNG!
...AN ELECTROMAGNET! IT'S PULLING MY STEEL WHEELCHAIR STRAIGHT TOWARD THOSE SPIKES... AND I CAN'T MOVE WITH MY PARALYZED LEGS!
RUNNING UP, DIRK SIZES UP THE SITUATION, THEN TURNS TO ANOTHER FLORAL PHENOMENON, NATIVE TO THE ASTEROID...
THIS CACTUS SPINE "SPEAR" CAN SAVE PITTA, THE INVALID URANIAN, FROM THE BOOBY-TRAP'S SPIKES...
...BY TANGLING IN THE WHEELCHAIR'S SPOKES AND JERKING IT AROUND!
PITTA FLEW OUT, BUT HE'S SAFE! THE MAGNET HAS NO POWER OVER FLESH-AND-BLOOD!

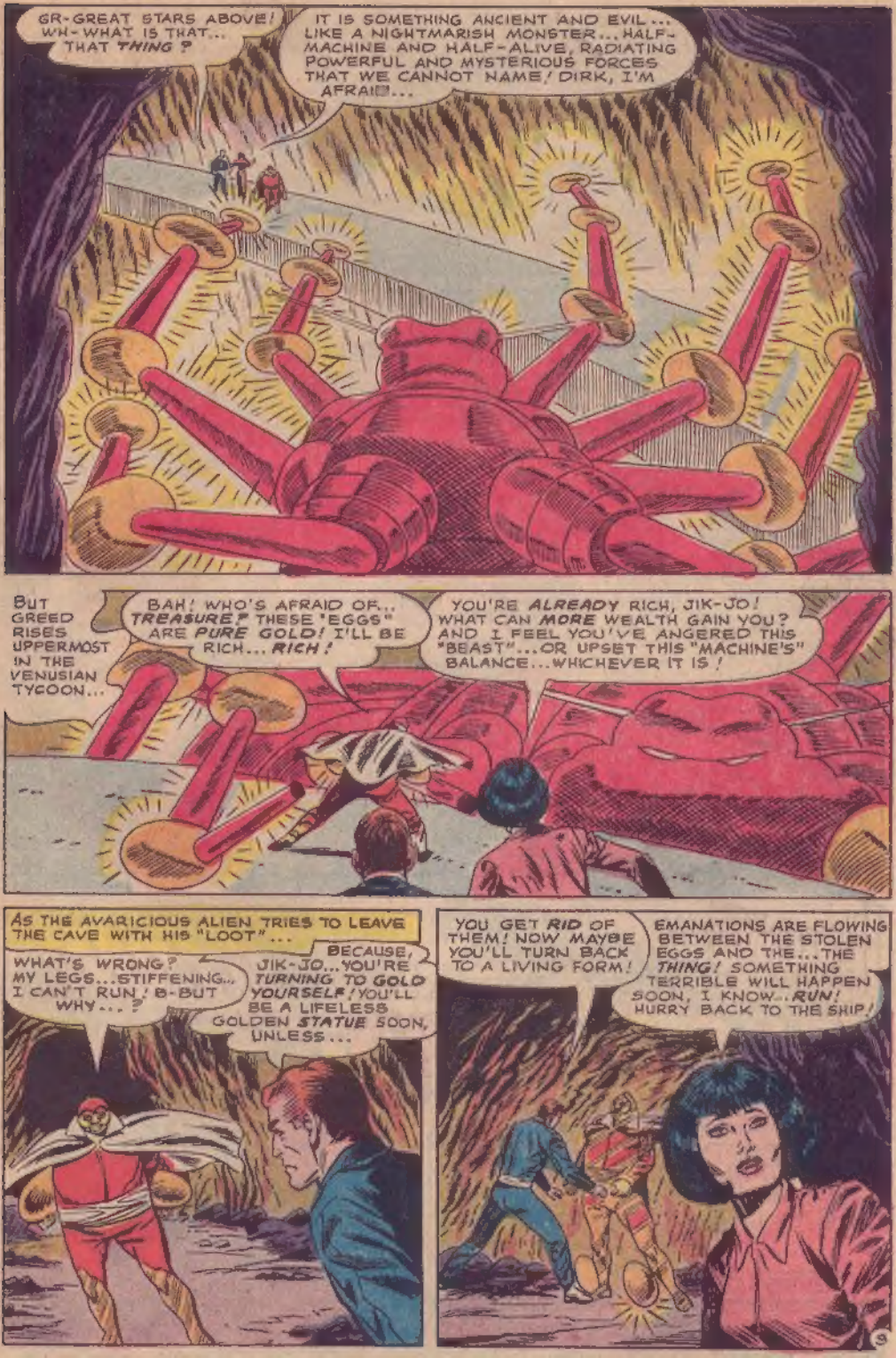
BUT PITTA CAN'T RETURN TO THE SHIP WITH HIS WHEELCHAIR WRECKED...
LOOK, CYRA! HE'S WALKING AGAIN! HE'S TOO DAZED TO REALIZE HIS PARALYSIS IS GONE! WELL, LET'S FIND JIK-JO, THE LAST ALIEN!

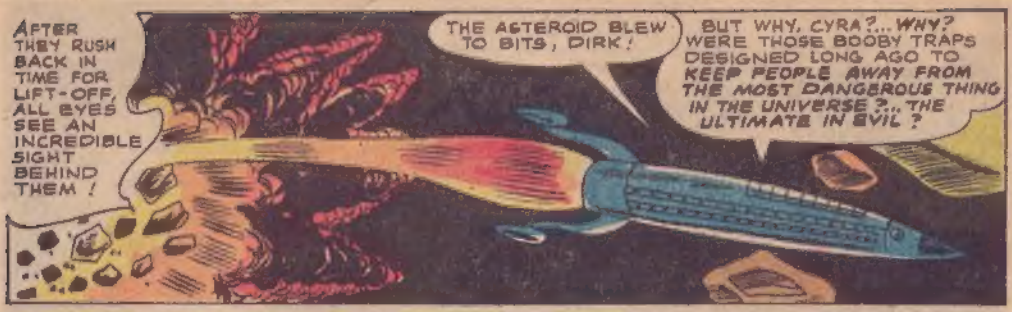
HIS FOOTPRINTS LEAD INTO THIS CAVE!
OOHHH... THIS IS THE SOURCE OF THOSE EVIL EMANATIONS! BE CAREFUL, DEAR... GREAT DANGER LIES WITHIN, IF MY FEMININE INTUITION IS RIGHT!


NOT FAR AHEAD OF THEM, THE VENUSIAN TYCOON TRIPS A CAVE-TRAP TRIGGER...
WHUNG!
HELP! LIGHTNING BOLTS SIZZLING BACK AND FORTH!
JIK-JO IS FROZEN WITH FRIGHT! HE'LL BE ELECTROCUTED IN ANOTHER SECOND!

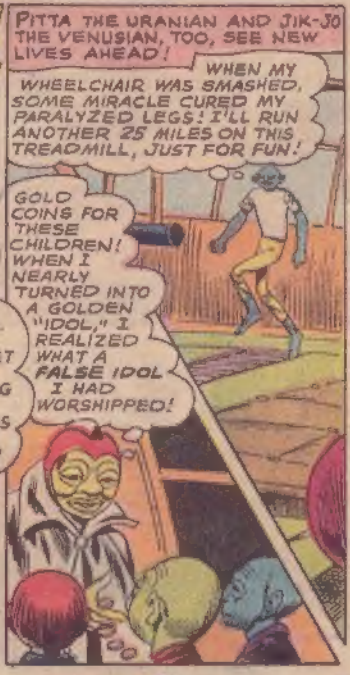
ONE SLIM HOPE... TO RIP UP THIS LEATHER CASE HOLDING OUR PHOTOGRAPHIC EQUIPMENT!
R-R!PP

NOW TO TOSS IT OVER ONE KNOB AND INSULATE IT FROM THE OTHER ONE, BREAKING THE CIRCUIT!
TH-THANKS, EARTHMAN! BUT COME, I GLIMPSED SOMETHING AHEAD THAT SPARKLES LIKE GOLD!


GR-GREAT STARS ABOVE! WH-WHAT IS THAT... THAT THING?
IT IS SOMETHING ANCIENT AND EVIL... LIKE A NIGHTMARISH MONSTER... HALF-MACHINE AND HALF-ALIVE, RADIATING POWERFUL AND MYSTERIOUS FORCES THAT WE CANNOT NAME! DIRK, I'M AFRAID...
BUT GREED RISES UPPERMOST IN THE VENUSIAN TYCOON...
BAH! WHO'S AFRAID OF... TREASURE? THESE "EGGS" ARE PURE GOLD! I'LL BE RICH... RICH!
YOU'RE ALREADY RICH, JIK-JO! WHAT CAN MORE WEALTH GAIN YOU? AND I FEEL YOU'VE ANGERED THIS "BEAST"...OR UPSET THIS "MACHINE'S" BALANCE...WHICHEVER IT IS!
AS THE AVARICIOUS ALIEN TRIES TO LEAVE THE CAVE WITH HIS "LOOT"...
WHAT'S WRONG? MY LEGS...STIFFENING... I CAN'T RUN! B-BUT WHY...?
BECAUSE, JIK-JO...YOU'RE TURNING TO GOLD YOURSELF! YOU'LL BE A LIFELESS GOLDEN STATUE SOON, UNLESS...
YOU GET RID OF THEM! NOW MAYBE YOU'LL TURN BACK TO A LIVING FORM!
EMANATIONS ARE FLOWING BETWEEN THE STOLEN EGGS AND THE...THE THING! SOMETHING TERRIBLE WILL HAPPEN SOON, I KNOW..RUN! HURRY BACK TO THE SHIP!


AFTER THEY RUSH BACK IN TIME FOR LIFT-OFF, ALL EYES SEE AN INCREDIBLE SIGHT BEHIND THEM!
THE ASTEROID BLEW TO BITS, DIRK!
BUT WHY, CYRA?... WHY? WERE THOSE BOOBY TRAPS DESIGNED LONG AGO TO KEEP PEOPLE AWAY FROM THE MOST DANGEROUS THING IN THE UNIVERSE?... THE ULTIMATE IN EVIL?

DANGEROUS? EVIL? NOT SO-- PARADOXICALLY-- TO GOL, THE COWARDLY MARTIAN, OR XAXXO, THE BANKRUPT MERCURIAN!
QUIET, ANIMAL!
HELPING TO SAVE THAT EARTH-GIRL CONQUERED MY FEARS... I'M NO LONGER A COWARD!
I FACED DEATH FROM THE SPIKED JUGGERNAUT... AND FOUND LIFE WAS SWEET AND WORTH LIVING! I'M GOING TO ENJOY THAT RESORT, PENNILESS OR NOT, AND THEN MAKE A NEW START!
GRRR
REPORT
LIVE


PITTA THE URANIAN AND JIK-JO THE VENUSIAN, TOO, SEE NEW LIVES AHEAD!
WHEN MY WHEELCHAIR WAS SMASHED, SOME MIRACLE CURED MY PARALYZED LEGS! I'LL RUN ANOTHER 25 MILES ON THIS TREADMILL, JUST FOR FUN!
GOLD COINS FOR THESE CHILDREN! WHEN I NEARLY TURNED INTO A GOLDEN "IDOL," I REALIZED WHAT A FALSE IDOL I HAD WORSHIPPED!

TWO OTHER HEARTS ARE HAPPY...THOUGH PUZZLED...
OH, MY WONDERFUL HERO HUSBAND! WHAT STORIES I'LL HAVE TO TELL OUR CHILDREN ABOUT THE ASTEROID AND ITS... UH... ITS WHAT?
YES, JUST WHAT WAS THAT THING SOME ANCIENT GUARDIANS KEPT IMPRISONED AND ISOLATED BY DEADLY BOOBY-TRAPS? ...SIGH!... I GUESS THE UNIVERSE WILL NEVER KNOW!
THE END

The KING of the PANTHER GANG wanted a CROWN--
...AND THAT MEANT SNATCHING IT AWAY FROM A BEAUTY CONTEST WINNER! BUT TO GAIN HIS CROWNING VICTORY, HE HAD TO CLAW HIS WAY PAST The ATOM!
BEAUTY and the BEAST-GANG in
The ATOM
The PANTHER was a COOL CAT OUT TO WHAT A KILL!--UNTIL The ATOM TURNED ON THE HEAT WITH HIS EXPLOSIVE POSE!
DC